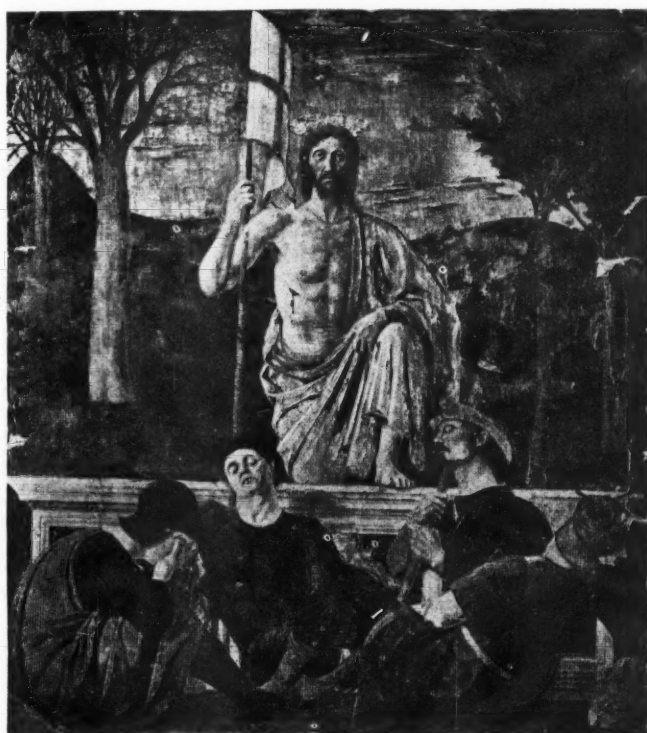


# DESIGN

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"The Resurrection" by Pier dei Franceschi  
Based on triangle with horizontal and vertical lines

## THE TRIANGLE AND THE ABSTRACT

A Problem in Composition

Helen Rhodes

University of Washington

**M**OST teachers of art will agree with the writer that one of the great objectives in the teaching of Design or Composition deals with the development of self-expression; the growth of freedom in individual adventuring. Another great objective, quite as easily agreed upon, would centre around appreciations; appreciation of the fine and the beautiful, the choice and the rare, the original and the distinctive in the great art of the past and the present. And a third, the understanding and application of the universal basic laws which underlie the harmonies in all Fine and Applied Art.

The inhibitions which seem to combine to interfere with original self-expression as well as with fine appreciations in College or High School art students are many. All kinds of backgrounds, most of them mediocre and crude, from the art standpoint, have helped to create the concepts in the thought of such students. Almost all come from homes where the cheap popular colored print of the day forms the wall decoration and from town or city streets where aggressive, highly-colored bill-boards are the rule. Many of the "landmarks" of our commercial age—the so-called "Art Departments" in our Department Stores, the trite and superficial design of most of our magazine covers, our com-

mercial Christmas cards—all help to create mental images that are baneful as well as deadening to any natural art culture. Again, many students who may have had naturally inventive and independent methods of thinking in their art expression as little children, have lost this thru lack of exercise and opportunity or because thru the grades they have attended schools where art teaching was of the formalized dictated variety.

A college teacher of Art Structure or Design finds that the so-called "clever" students in her classes, those who have been interested in art for some time, have all sorts of facile, stereotyped forms of design and pictorial composition at their finger tips! If she assigns a problem in composition, designating "a Street Scene", she is sure to get clever reproductions of the men in "Hart, Shaffner & Marx" advertisements or if the problem assigned happens to deal with Medieval times, where battlemented walls and castles are appropriate, a stereotyped form of castle and knight, derived geneologically from "Kay Neilson" illustrations, is quite as certain to prevail. It is therefore a pleasant and noteworthy experience to find a High School or College art exhibit which has side tracked from the obvious rehashing of these oft repeated themes and models. And that teacher



"Wife of an Officer" by Rembrandt

Many portraits by both old and modern masters are based on triangle



Modern Wood Block based on triangle by Aage Roose

of Design is accounted fortunate who can lead the students into new and fresh pastures where a few varieties of choice original flowers may appear.

With these considerations in mind, it is quite obvious that a wise teacher of design looks for problems that will exert as little temptation as possible toward the reproduction of known models. For some classes, purely abstract problems are, therefore, often valuable. The writer remembers one problem given in an advanced composition class at the University of Washington where the students were told to use simple cubes, pyramids, cylinders and other geometrically derived forms in a constructive imaginative problem, working out the composition first in charcoal and later in oil color. The consideration of a third dimension made this problem unusually interesting. Some of the Freshman classes in Design have tried semi-abstract problems in three dimensions, with buildings and interiors as unreal and yet as designed as the scenes of "Dr. Caligari's Cabinet." Recently a Freshman class worked on a semi-abstract problem with figures. Some of the illustrations used for this article will give an idea of the results.

In this problem, the students were directed to take a sheet of yellow manilla paper and to draw thereon a twelve inch square. The square was to be covered with a charcoal tone slightly darker than middle value and then, with kneaded eraser and chamois with which to take out light tones and with extra charcoal for the darker tones, the students were ready for exploration in the realm of Notan or dark and light composition. There was one limitation: the arrangement in the square was to be based upon the triangle. Small sketches were drawn hastily on the board by the instructor to suggest how many different positions a triangle might be made to take in a square. Objects or figures therefore might have just as great variety in placement. The forms suggested for the composition were to be semi-abstract and the human figure was to be used but with features of the face and all details eliminated. Any other forms which the student might think were needed to help out spacing might be added. The composition might be

thought of in two dimensions or, if they wished, in three-dimensional space. Attention was called also to the use of the basic laws in composition. This manner of approach focused the attention upon constructive arrangement. The very limitation would be a spur to endeavor as it would give a desire to control a situation. Aside from helping them to build up an arrangement of forms in strong dark and light, with attention directed upon notan and structure, it would naturally eliminate the pictorial elements which often obstruct original composition and by concentrating attention upon dark and light, rather than upon correct drawing of the figure, the temptation to use the clever forms already popularized was eliminated.

The students were encouraged to make several arrangements, choosing the best for the final finished composition. It was a short problem, occupying, in the working out, only four or five periods of two hours each. Of course, some of the first "try-outs" were failures but the instructor gave plenty of time to this preliminary part of the work and very little advice, knowing that the most valuable part of any art-composition lesson is this first experimental stage, where failures, rearrangements and new creative ideas mark the pathway to progress. The class had "a lot of fun" too, as one youth expressed it, in experimenting.

The last day of the problem, the finished compositions were pinned up on the exhibition board and the class joined the instructor in a critical analysis of the work which, as a discussion, was both constructive and impersonal and served to increase understanding of the basic laws of rhythm, subordination, variety, unity and opposition, which has been applied. A short talk was then given the students on the interesting use of triangular construction as one of the many helps in arrangement which had been applied by artists down through the ages and they were shown copies of masterpieces in painting of the past and present where this type of space-breaking seemed to be the basis. Giotto used this form, either consciously or unconsciously, in many of his compositions with landscape and figure. The head and shoulders in a portrait composition naturally fall into this form. The students were shown covers and advertisements from "Vogue" and several modern wood-cuts where the triangular form was used by the artists. Attention was also called to one of the modern art movements



Modern Wood Block based on triangle by Hermann-Paul

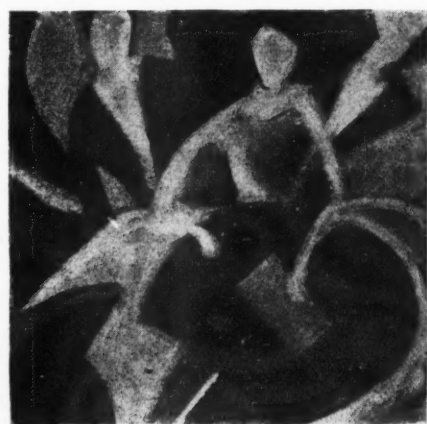




Miss Wolf



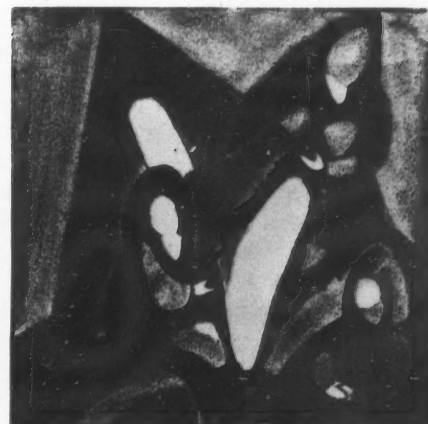
Frances Smith



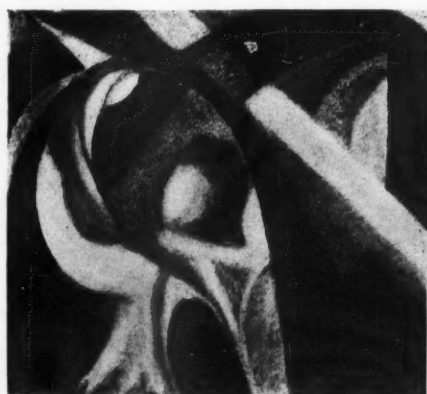
Gertrude Howes



Frances Smith



Kenneth Striker



E. Houston



Dorothy Pamment



D. Van Iderstine



Linoleum Illustration for Nursery Rhyme  
—Charlotte Rawson



Wood Block Bible Illustration  
—Hjordis C. Smith



Wood Block Bible Illustration  
—Ruth Pennington

toward abstract composition, significant just now in this country through the exhibitions of "The Blue Four."

In this way the knowledge of the class was broadened to include several types of composition. The experience which the members themselves had had in composing, together with these comparisons, would make it more easy to "transfer" the knowledge so gained to future experiences. And lastly, the instructors' own experience and training in composition and her knowledge of the art of the past had added appreciations to those which the students already had. The discussions during the last two years by well-known psy-

chologists, of the theories of Prof. Cizek and other "free-expressionistic" methods of art teaching have served to stimulate "free expression" in art classes from the kindergarten to the college and have also emphasized, because of its omission by some of the "free-expression" teachers, the second vital point; that an art teacher if broad training has something to give to a class from her own experience and from her broader outlook upon the art of both past and present.

The most successful lesson in design or composition, is one in which, through interesting presentation, the students

have been stimulated to enjoy experiment in new fields, where the free and individual expression of each student has been protected through a minimum of advice and where, at a final criticism, the student's appreciations for the fine and choice in dark and light, color, line and spacial arrangement has been materially increased.



Christmas Card based on triangular construction—Margaret Strauss



Linoleum Block, a Pastoral  
D. A. Norling



Christmas Card based on triangular construction—D. A. Norling



## NEAR EAST BOY POTTERS

Mabell S. C. Smith

NOT far from Smyrna in Asia Minor is the little town of Kutahia, not of any importance politically or even commercially but a real factor in the art production of that part of the world. This was because of the presence of huge beds of fine clay well suited to the making of pottery.

For many scores of years the potters of Kutahia toiled proudly at their tasks, fathers handing down to sons their knowledge of the craft and sons adding with each generation to the delicate touch and the eye for color that was making the pottery increasingly beautiful in shapes and decoration.

The potters' colony before 1922 was made up of Armenians who had wandered westward several generations before, and of Ottoman Greeks, people of Greek descent but for a thousand years occupiers of the land now in the hands of their conquerors, the Turks. These Armenians and Greeks had long forgotten their native tongues and spoke Turkish. In many aspects of their mode of life they were like their Mohammedan neighbors, but, with the extraordinary tenacity that always has marked them they clung unflinchingly to their own religion—Christianity.

Came the Smyrna disaster in September, 1922, and after it the expulsion from Asia Minor of the Armenians and the Ottoman Greeks. The potters of Kutahia were among the deported and the future looked black indeed for them. For they know how to do but one thing. Potters they were and potters they must remain. Where should they find clay such as they were accustomed to? How could they be sure of keeping together?

It was a long period of wandering and anxiety and suffering. They could not do all that they hoped to—they were separated; but at least two good-sized groups kept together, and one in Greece, the other near Jerusalem, they found clay suitable for their need. Once again the graceful shapes, reproductions of old forms as well as modernizations, sprang from the potter's wheel and once more the unusual dull blues and greens, sometimes pointed by a mere touch of coral, made lovely the flowing lines.

And the boy potters of the title? Their story, too, goes back to the Smyrna disaster. At that time Near East Relief was administering American money in the care of some 60,000 orphan children in Greece, Asia Minor, Russian Armenia and the Holy Land. They were the pitiful by-product of wars and massacres and famine and pestilence. After Smyrna it became clear that the organization could not protect them in Asia Minor and the 22,000 who were there were evacuated to Greece and her islands and to Syria and Palestine.

In the early days of Near East Relief's care of these luckless boys and girls the task was one of life saving. The children must be fed and clothed and sheltered. The number remaining in American care now is greatly reduced because thousands have been outplaced in homes of relatives or friends. Still there are about 35,000 in the orphanages and in subsidized homes. Just as always they must be fed and clothed and sheltered but an additional problem has arisen as they grow older. They must receive some schooling, for no wards of America can be permitted to grow up illiterate; and they must be trained to be self-supporting.

The latter is accomplished by teaching each boy and girl

a trade or craft by which he may earn his living when he goes out into the world from the orphanage. Then a job is found for him and a watchful eye is kept on him for a year or two lest he be exploited.

Needless to say, all this is exceedingly difficult in a part of the world where there is much unemployment and competition and grown men have a hard time getting along. The openings offered by the Kutahia potteries are welcomed. The boys are taken on as apprentices. They learn the entire process. Some throw the clay on the wheel; some do the firing; some draw the designs; some color the pottery; some apply the glaze. It is a craft that offers a definite and well-paid life work. The potters are proud of their quick and intelligent pupils. The boys are proud to belong to the guild of Kutahia potters. The Golden Rule has worked both ways—as it always does.

*Clay*—This comes from Beit Iksa near Nebi Samuel in the Jerusalem District, in its natural state and it comes in three different colors, greenish, yellowish and cream.

*Flint*—This comes from a place called Abu Dees, on the way to Jericho, and is found in the lime stone. This flint is broken up in a pestle and then ground in a mill to a very fine powder and is mixed with the clay which, on the potters' wheel, is shaped into various vases and also moulded into tiles.

*Baking*—When the pieces are in shape they are covered with a paste made from the white flint and baked once. The

(Continued on page 100)



A vase of "Kutahia" pottery made by Near East Relief ex-orphan, now apprenticed to potters in Jerusalem. The pottery, originally at Kutahia in Asia Minor, was moved to Jerusalem after the Smyrna disaster.

## SIMPLE JEWELRY

(Silver and Copper Combinations)

*Carlton Atherton*

THE student of decorative design desirous of avoiding the ordinary in his search for inspiration, may well turn to the art of the Polynesians. Their ornament more than that of any other distinct peoples, retains its original impulsion, and as a result, possesses a spontaneity and vigor that, unfortunately, is dissipated with the advance of civilization which so often subordinates design to technique. Motifs from the ornament of the Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, etc., are becoming mere adumbrations of the originals, unappetizingly rechauffé. The craftsman, who is either learning to design or is not sufficiently endowed with imagination to originate, but still does not wish revise or echo the usual motifs, will find liberating inspiration in the vital decorations of these South Sea Islanders. There, is found a system of ornament pregnant with suggestion of a new order, fresh and virile, uncontaminated by any influence from intercourse with the outer world. There, among the Polynesians is the primitive motif awaiting the student eager for a virgin field of decorative design.

One of the happy conditions the student meets in his survey of this phase of South Sea Island art is the lack of the petty restraint of the academicians. There has been no binding hierarchic tradition in its development, no "schools" with their narrow boundaries and restricted visions. Here, instead, is a boldness of line, a verve of unsophisticated feeling, a sweep of imagination which, though sometimes crude, is a welcome relief and a forthright inspiration to the searcher for a tonic against the anemic children of the conventional motif.

Art, after its primordial state of mere attempt at reproduction, is graduated very rapidly into a stage of symbolism

however crude it may be. This has been true of the ornamentation of the Polynesians. Fundamentally and originally South Sea Island decoration is derived from the animal kingdom. The insular influence, however, is apparent at once with boats, fish, and water motifs taking an important role, particularly in the more sophisticated and intricate patterns. The feathered inhabitants of these islands are probably the most prominent in the various motifs. The human figure is, also, much used in their decorative schemes, and to very good advantage. The accompanying illustrations are some of the most typical designs carved on paddles, dancing shields, club handles, and sacrificial knives. The desire in primitive man for decorations amounts to a positive craving, and, as can be seen by the sketches; the Polynesians are, by no means, an exception to this. All of the more intimate tools and household utensils are richly carved. Perhaps the most beautiful designs are to be found on the paddles, and war and dancing shield. At all times the motifs are derived from the immediate surroundings of the craftsman. The student might well take note of this and develop as motifs those things which he sees every day, keeping in mind that "beauty is in the eye of the beholder."

The page of adaptations was made to show the ready adaptability of this design to various pieces of jewelry—pins, buckles, bracelets, hat and dress ornaments, etc.—at the same time simple enough to present no technical difficulties for the beginner. In this instance the pieces shown are of pierced silver backed with copper, an appropriate and most effective way of carrying out this type of ornament. It also gives much greater freedom than simple piercing as it is not so necessary to avoid projections or "floating parts"; their super-imposition on the copper ties them. In adapting these designs for his work, the student should aim for the direct, naive treatment of the original, using all his invention and dexterity to avoid "nigglings." A brush and India ink are the best tools for this as they will auto-

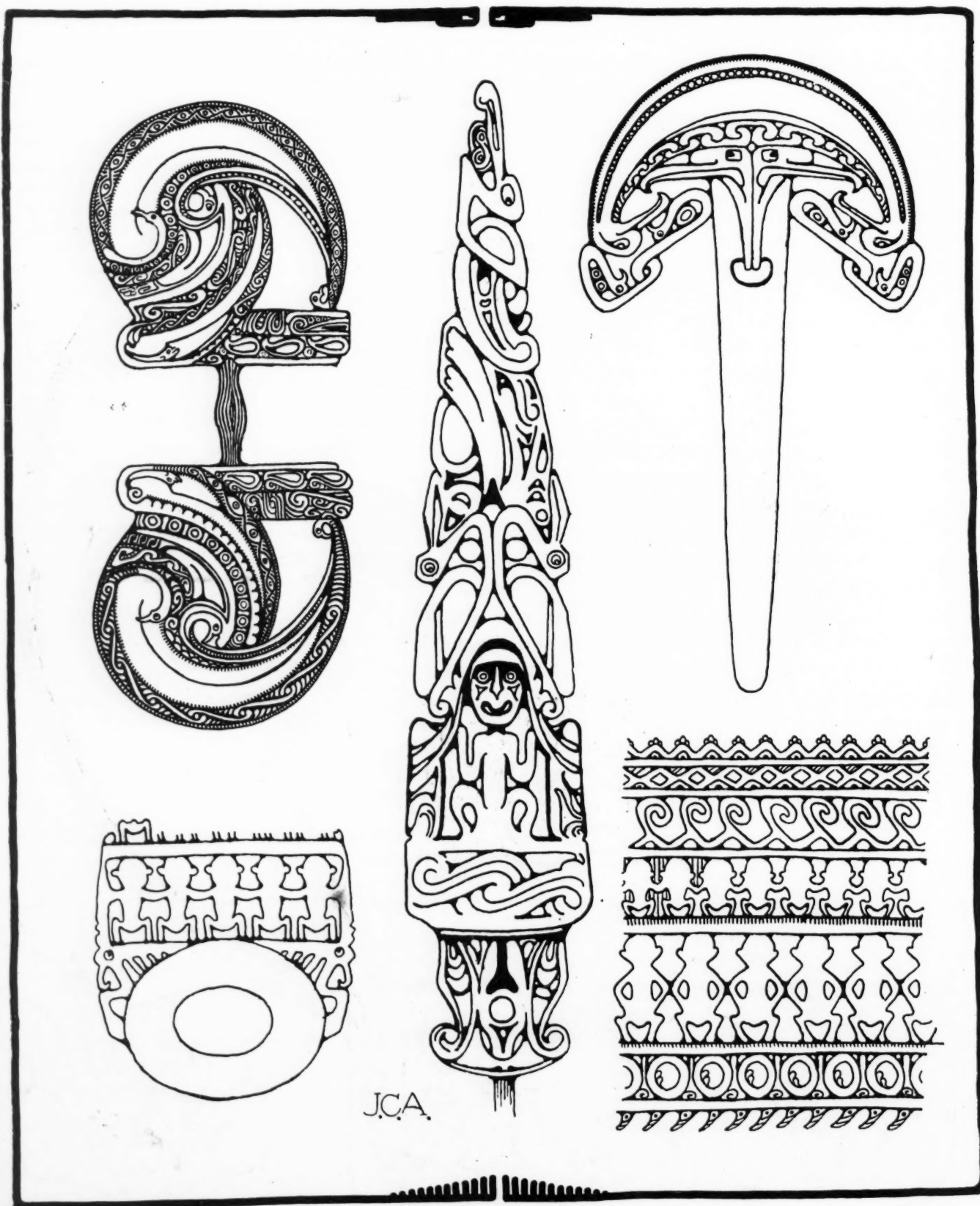
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Masks by Margy Hanbridge, Polytechnic High School, San Francisco, Calif., Edith Bushnell, Instructor





Plate—Jetta Ehlers



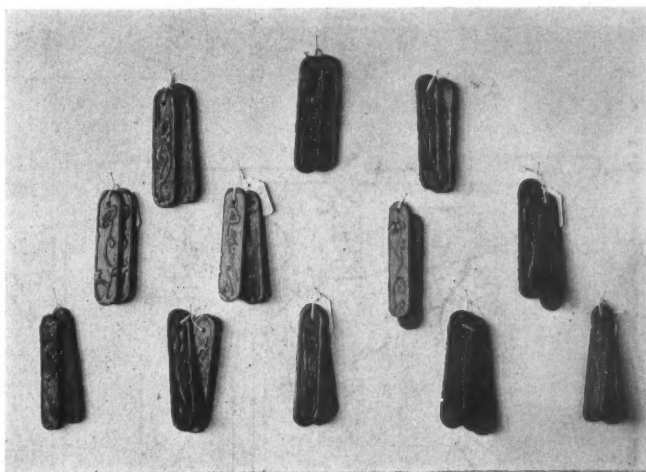
Polynesian Carvings—Carlton Atherton



matically eliminate unnecessary detail and give a freedom to the work otherwise almost unattainable. With a little practice the brush will be mastered even though it does seem a bit awkward at first. Slight irregularities should be disregarded as they will be eradicated in execution. Several variations of each motif should be made and then the best selected, redrawn carefully with the brush, then traced and inked on good stout tracing paper. This can be glued on to the silver with diluted glue as explained in the February 1925 number of DESIGN—Keramic Studio. The silver and copper should be about gauge twenty-two. If it were much thicker the piece when finished would be too heavy. The piercing is done as explained in the first article on "Simple Jewelry" (in February 1925 issue). Make the copper piece slightly larger than the silver, this facilitates the soldering. The copper can be easily filed down later. The piercing being finished both the copper and the silver are scraped "bright" on the surface which are to be soldered together. Fairly coarse emery paper will accomplish this if no scraper is at hand. Later, however, all the scratches must be removed from the copper with varying grades of finer emery paper. It is not necessary to remove the scratches from the back of the silver. In order to make the soldering simpler it is best to file a piece of "easy" (not soft) flowing solder collecting the filings on a piece of paper. The pierced silver should be placed on the copper and a line traced all about the design, then a wash of borax water is brushed on that part of the copper to be covered by the design. The bright side of the silver is washed with borax water and while wet the solder filings are sprinkled over it. The silver is next placed on the charcoal-block and heated until the solder flows evenly over the entire surface, afterward being pickled either by boiling in the acid solution or immersing it while still hot in a fifteen to twenty percent solution. Now, the silver should be washed again with borax water on the soldered side and that side placed in position on the copper and wired firmly to it with binding

wire. It would be too difficult, almost impossible, to solder the silver to the copper with a small blow or automatic torch, so unless a large torch is at hand this soldering can be done either by holding the piece over the gas flame with long tongs or thrusting it into a coal fire. The gas is better as the sulphur in the coal quickly oxidizes the metal and prevents the solder from flowing. The soldering accomplished, the copper at the edge is filed into the proper shape, and the piece cleaned and pickled. If desired the piece may be oxidized by brushing a solution of silver or sulphur and water on it and then heating it. It is now finished except for polishing which is done with jeweler's wax, rouge and a buffer or a piece of flannel. In the case of bracelets, pins, etc., the subsequent solderings must be done to complete the pieces before they are pickled, oxidized and buffed.

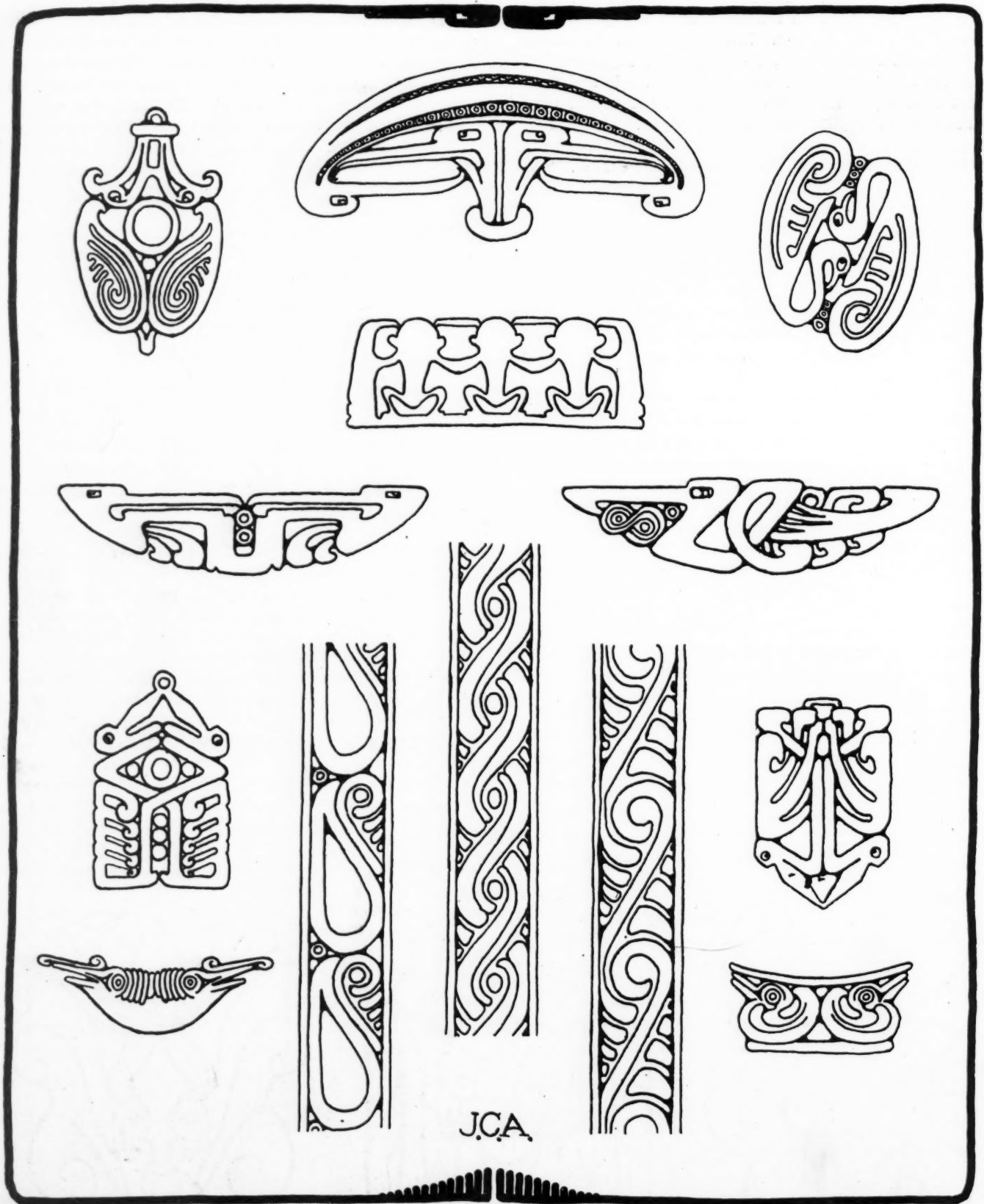
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Curtain Pulls—Mabel E. Northrop



Masks by Margy Hanbridge, Polytechnic High School, San Francisco, Calif., Edith Bushnell, Instructor



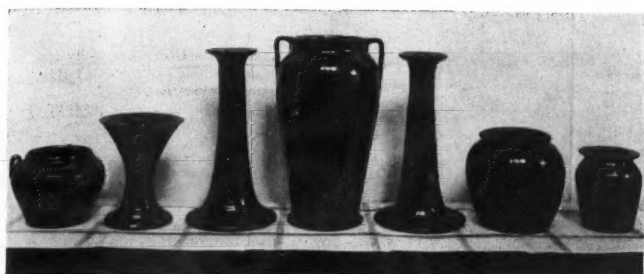
Adaptations for Pins, Bracelets, Pendants, and Buckles—Carlton Atherton





## DESIGN

91



Great Simplicity and Character

### NORTH CAROLINA POTTERY—AN EARLY AMERICAN SURVIVAL

*Felix Payant*

AFTER rambling among the various potteries of North Carolina where the colorful, lustrous pieces seem to speak for themselves and of their important place in the lives of the people, one's thoughts seem to turn to the fact that ever since the days when the primitive Cro-Magnon man scratched decorative pictures on the walls of his cave, to satisfy his strong aesthetic urge, mankind has been working to provide itself with utensils which not only has its function, but at the same time possess suitable refinement of design. As man felt the need for certain articles, he looked about for a suitable material in nature and when he found it set to work to construct the material into the desired result. While these results may have been crude at first, the materials little by little came under his control. And as he ceased to feel limited by the stubbornness of the material, there came a time when he expressed his ideas of what the beauty in such an object should be. Then as his skill grew he frequently became so interested in it that the simple beauty was lost and the whole thing became merely a demonstration of skill. And now in these days since the industrial revolution when we are in a maelstrom of machinery, we need to stop often and to consider what is being done about the necessity for beauty in the common place utensils which we must have about us. Nothing can be of greater value from an art educational point of view than to realize what is the origin—the *raison d'être*—of this or that particular craft, and what its significance really is.

With our rapidly growing wealth and the possibilities of greater leisure, travel and enjoyment we realize the real tremendous problem before us as a nation of improving our standards of art appreciation. Who has not stood aghast before some horrible example where vast sums were spent on a monstrous home or theatre or public building which stands as a monument to some one's lack of appreciation? True it is that we are a young nation grown suddenly rich and moving at a rhythm which is unbelievable; yet much to the great satisfaction of the few among us who are really interested in the development of our nation's arts we occasionally find some very rare movement which is still keeping alive the art of some former day. The new American wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art with its various galleries so discriminatingly adorned with pieces of early American Arts in furniture, textiles and glassware, has been an unceasing source of joy and inspiration to our leaders in the Industrial Arts. And anyone who has sojourned in North Carolina and among its sand hills has had a similar thrill when discovering there those potters—Steeds-Aumons, the picturesque Coles and the more finished

Jugtown people as well as several others not far away. By all of these beautiful earthen-ware is produced as simply, as sincerely as it was in the days when the first colonist from England settled that region. It has survived since 1740, since the days when their English ancestors felt the need of pottery, discovered the native clay and started to kick the wheel from which sprung these earthen accessories.

One can appreciate more fully the significance of this Carolina pottery if he understands the relation which this craft bears to the life of men and his early development. For as has been well said many times before an art must be judged in its relation to life. And just as art must grow out of life, art which is an outgrowth of art is no longer art. Primitive man one day decided that he needed a receptacle with which to gather and carry the berries and nuts which he used for food and which grew plentifully among the wooded hills about his cave home. He discovered that twigs could be easily interwoven in such a way as to produce the desired utensil which might be called a basket or at least was the beginning of basket making and later perhaps of the textile arts. The story of these we all realize is a long one and most intimately associated with life of the race. Some of the materials which he used later for his more perfect baskets were grasses and rushes and these were used in a spiral construction very much like that which we see in the Indian baskets made in Western states today. Then there came a time when baskets were inadequate to the needs of primitive man who had learned the use of fire and enjoyed cooked foods. The baskets were water tight and he devised a method of boiling water in them by the use of hot stones which he put in. But very soon after this the original piece of pottery was made when he decided to cover the outside of his coiled basket with coils of clay in order to place it over the fire, thus, planning to make it fire proof, when lo! and behold, the clay hardened, separated from the basket and the ambitious cook found he had made an earthen bowl. Omitting the basket stage thereafter he had actually begun to make pottery in a way we have since called the "coil method" which simply means building up the form of the piece by a spiral arrangement of coils of clay which the very primitive potter worked together with his fingers for the purpose of keeping the joints tight. This is the way most of the Indian pottery of our Southwest and that of other primitive peoples is made.

The next chapter in this story was the invention of the



Table Sets in Blue Greys and Autumn Colors



Dignified Though Small



Colorful Pots Glazed only on the Inside



Intimately Related to Everyday Life

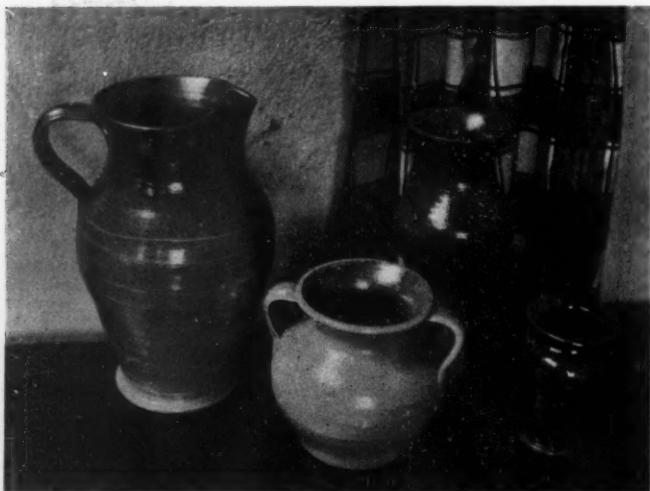
potter's wheel which he kept revolving by means of his feet. This of course made the process much quicker for the plastic quality of the clay makes it possible for the artisan to "throw" a piece of pottery in an instant. It is always a source of great interest to see a vase rise like magic at the touch of the potter while he keeps the wheel in action by a kicking motion with his foot. So we find that our North Carolina potter has deviated little from the methods of antiquity in producing his pots and yet is able in his naive way to produce what he wishes. For he too uses just such a wheel to construct the pottery illustrated. The point to be emphasized in this pottery, as a whole, is that it is a simple, direct and honest expression of these quiet, simple people who have been little affected by the whirl of industry about them. And it is this that makes their contribution an important one in the art history of America. They, too, saw a need in their isolated section which they must fill, found the necessary clay in their environment already provided by nature and started to create. And the pieces reproduced here plainly show that modern industry thus far has done little to mar the progress of this beautiful art.

Simplicity is the key note of all phases of this North Carolina pottery. The pieces are all made for simple uses—water jugs, pitchers, jars for food, brandy bottles, candle sticks, wide spreading cups with saucers, watering jars for poultry, churns and vases. The glazes are produced in a

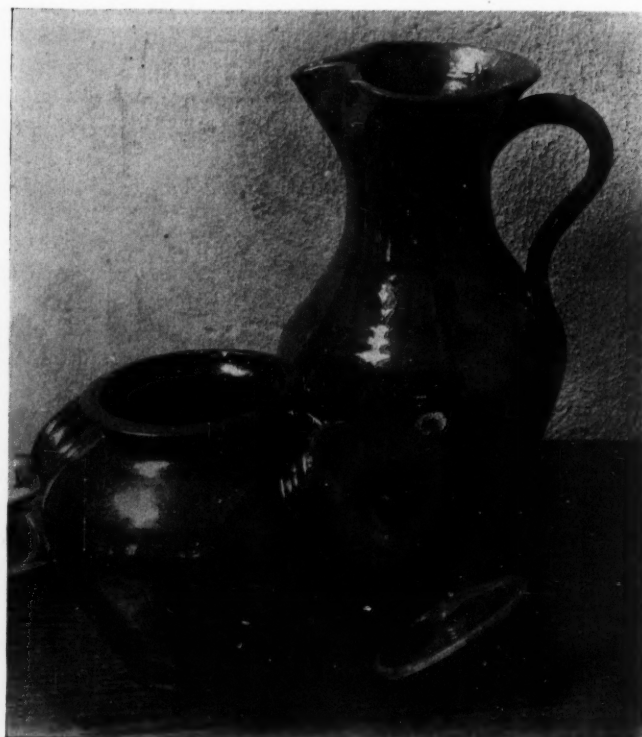
homely way. Beautiful grays are produced by sprinkling salt on the clay at firing, the beautiful golds, oranges and browns are the result of red lead and brown sugar, while another is a mixture containing ground glass and charcoal. Some rare pieces are not glazed at all.

Life seems to be built by contrasts however, and so with these potteries—a bit of eighteenth century America serenely living on, we find not far away popular play grounds of sophisticated twentieth century America. The art lover who may find himself at Pinehurst or vicinity may do well to spend some time on the highways and byways in search of these rare surprises. Such attempts will be well rewarded if he succeeds in locating Steeds, or Aumons, which are quite accessible on the main highway. A still greater treat, however, awaits those persistent enough to locate the picturesque Mr. Coles or the more refined Jug-town establishment.

*(To be continued.)*



Warm Browns and Greys



Useful and Beautiful



## A YEAR OF CREATIVE DESIGN

*Sylvia Coster*

**L**ONG years ago, before everything was subjected to analysis, and the microscope discovered the machinery of life, and the mind reduced its own working to a science, beauty was proudly declared to be unresolvable, charm a mystery, art a direct gift of the gods. Before this generation takes the last one-way road all three of these assertions will have been disputed many times. Beauty has already been analyzed. The source of charm has been discovered. Art is teachable.

One wonders a little if the apparent success of analysis in teaching does not lie in the enthusiasm of the teacher and the taught. Perhaps the future generation will again dispute our results. It should. But aside from the shifting values achieved by each and spurned by each, the long road of generations down which our race travels is lined with certain permanent achievements. One of these achievements is the recognition of certain permanent elements in design, such as the connotation of strength in line, the suggestion of rhythm in masses, the appreciation of balance in weight and color. Of course our primary intelligence along these lines comes from actual behavior habits. We expect to sit in a "Y" shaped branch and have it break. We expect to sit on a "T" shaped chair and have it hold us. We expect to enjoy an alternate motion and rest and to be utterly wearied by either alone. We expect to find masses of equally brilliant color on the same plane, and to sense distance between us and gray colors; and to find equal masses larger in appearance the nearer they are to us. All this goes without saying, but there is more may be said along the same line. There is an infinite number of associations and recalls and interrelations for every form presented in the guise of art.

If these associations and recalls are beautiful but somewhat dim, we say the work has indefinable charm. When all is so frankly worked out that "he who runs may read," we say the work has elemental strength. It is the faun in all of us who rejoices in leafy rhythms. It is the first builder of the race who still admonishes us to avoid weak constructions. And the little child we once was, who won his upright position by many a tumble, still enjoys an example of good balance.

Why not base our first lessons in design on these things and employ elemental and universal pleasure to clinch good work?

This is not a disturbing novelty. Most good teachers do it anyway. But many think they must start—"with a simple flower form, after which we proceed to conventionalize animals and birds, and finally end with a decorative treatment of the human figure." Any good student will appreciate ending with anything. Their satisfaction is usually in proportion to the speed of the ending. And the decorative treatment of the human figure is such a chest-filling idea that it sounds well as an aim. Moreover, the decorative treatment of the human figure is certainly elemental in its appeal. But it is elemental vanity, not elemental design.

In the process of starting with a simple flower form and following that with ascending biological phyla the good teacher stresses balance and rhythm and strength in her

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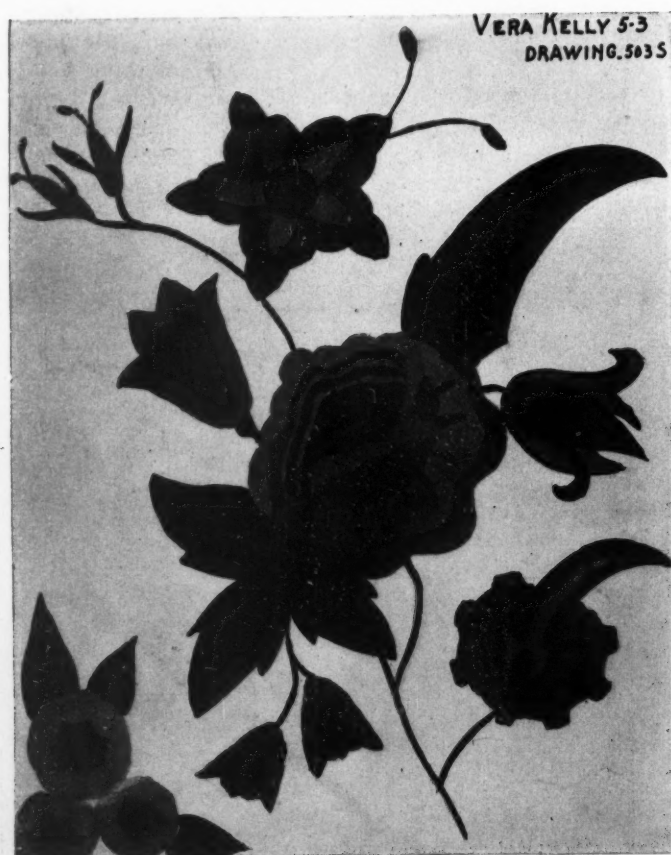




Margaret Erickson



Hortense Philips



Vera Kelly



Miss Nahabed



criticisms. But she does not achieve an attitude of appreciation for these things for themselves in her pupils. They have formed habits of flower-thinking, animal-thinking, figure-thinking. And when their experience includes other than these subjects, they are rather at a loss. Creative design should start with the elements of pleasure common to all design and be carried out with so little assistance from established forms that appreciation of the elements of beauty and art will be the main harvest, rather than a collection of units to be adapted to various uses. In an effort to develop really independent thinking the writer worked out a course of study based on the rhythm of rest and motion, balance of force and weight in mass and color, the unity of strong construction, the interest of special technics. This was followed by a course presenting problems in the four major crafts. It will be noticed that the projects are in each course four in number. Let it be understood by the cavalier right at the beginning that four is not a holy number to the writer. There are many other principles and crafts worthy of our best effort, but four is all that seemed practical to attempt in one term of twenty weeks. And so—to begin.

The first lesson for any beginner in art is to try to visualize the results of his labors. We spent two lessons attempting this by means of everything except an example of the task in hand. We studied buildings and dishes and each others' dresses. We listened to poetry of the lyric style and a little modern verse. We discussed music and its chief charms. And then we decided to do a rug for a bungalow or small living room. It was not to be pretentious. We were to "do" it, not to try it. There was not to be any pottering about in want of an idea, nor any trying over again for faulty technic. We decided to like the rug when finished, and the class was promised it should rate its own work on this basis.

During the second lesson the nature of rugs came up. Several recited to the class on assignment from the previous day. The square weave of the rug was noted. Various surfaces were described. It became an interesting lesson when one Syrian student described the rug-making of his own land from his experience in his own home village in the Syrian hills. Someone waved an inquiring hand and asked

if he might try making an oriental rug design. The class voted that such work would not be original. Then another student protested that anything they might do would not be very original anyway. None of them knew enough about it. This brought about a discussion on what was going to be the nature of a design which they could do. We went back to the dancing and poetry and discovered that our rug pattern looked like a stiff little group of figures moving evenly around the rug, or like "the Charleston," one little figure going many ways in the center. The students made a choice and that moment, unconsciously, they began to visualize their design. There was no pattern in the room for them to consult. But these novices had each placed their main mass of decoration in the vision they had of their future pattern.

The next step was to find a little figure that would march evenly around the rug, or display itself in the center. We analyzed the motions of dancing and walking. We found slants balanced, we found verticals and horizontals. And there was a number of interesting constructions reminiscent of ballet poses and fluffy skirts. Then we went back to the nature of our rug. It would not do to have lines only. That gave us no chance for color. Little by little, through class criticism and neighborly advice, masses were developed from our slanted lines, and orderly arrangement with variety and balance were asserted. There was no formal discipline at any time for many a precious reaction is lost to the teacher who insists on silence. As the lesson was only to introduce the subject of design with emphasis on balance of force and weight, no startling originality was expected, yet no two designs in the room resembled each other and no help other than criticism had been given.

The units were developed in charcoal on squared paper first. There was no effort to adhere to the squared lines. It was a lazy way of restraining the slants and keeping even measures, but in an introductory lesson anything that simplifies the technical difficulties is wise. We had progressed far toward an idea of what our final design would be. In fact, the students thought they had finished. But this was not an exercise in design, it was to represent something real. So the class decided that until it was

*(Continued on page 99)*



Miss Monks



Jack Breslau



Auletta Carl

## BEGINNERS' CORNER

*Jetta Ehlers . . . 23 Sherman Ave., Newark, N. J.*

## ABOUT CUPS AND SAUCERS

A CUP and saucer seems an easy object to decorate and yet many workers are more or less puzzled in planning them. Incidentally, if one has a good design for a cup and saucer one has a good one for an entire service. There are several types of decoration from which to choose. Four examples are given and there are still more which you may discover with a little ingenuity. First, there is a simple floret, then the floret used in a band. Next the all-over, and fourth a medallion. They all grew from the simple floret of the first and are a hint of what even the rather inexperienced worker may accomplish by re-arranging a unit. There are so many attractive motifs to be found in the pages of DESIGN—Keramic Studio and no great measure of courage required for the beginner to do something with them which shall bear the stamp of individuality. You will notice that the band arrangements on each cup are different. Even in small matters such as this one may have variety and added interest.

In choosing cups and saucers be sure to have good handles. Avoid those which are fussy and over-elaborate, as these rarely are easy to hold. Too small a handle is also bad for the same reason. Cups which have a very small base are top-heavy as a rule and therefore not very practical. For the morning cup of coffee the men of the house

will vote unanimously for the generous-sized ones, and perhaps they won't be alone in the vote. There is something about a large cup of fragrant coffee with the proper trimmings that starts the day right. Some, alas! have to brace up with substitutes, but surely that will go down better if the cup in which it is served charms the eye, though some may cheerfully pass up the big cup. For after-dinner coffee do not choose the very tiny ones, though the small cup is correct. Again the men of the house will applaud. There are many good shapes to be had outside of the very small ones which are sometimes so tiny as to be a bit absurd. There is another shape to be avoided and that is the very tall and narrow cups commonly called chocolate cups, they hold so little to begin with and are awkward to drink from in the bargain. A better cup for the purpose is the sort which is not as wide across the top as the average teacup, and is straighter and a little taller. The idea, I believe, is that the low wide spreading cup cools the chocolate too quickly. For tea the cup should be a fair size but not so large as the large coffee cup. If you wish something very choice and lovely for a best set use Belleek. Many beautiful shapes are to be had in this ware, and while expensive, one is more than repaid in the finished article. There are so many good shapes from which to choose that with little effort one may select something suitable for any service desired. It is safe to avoid the bizarre, the cup with feet, the handle which is elaborate and difficult to hold. In other words keep to the simple good line things. In doing cup No. 1 or No. 4 use one motif on each side. A nice touch is given by placing a motif in the center of the saucer, so that



No. 1  
No. 3

No. 2  
No. 4





Teapot Stand—Jetta Ehlers

when the cup is lifted one is greeted by the bit of unexpected decoration.

As a rule keep the saucers simple, using chiefly bands as decoration. Where a border is used on the cup the effect is apt to be very heavy if it is repeated on the saucer as well. Just the bands will serve to repeat the color, and as a rule is sufficient decoration, besides cutting the work down considerably.

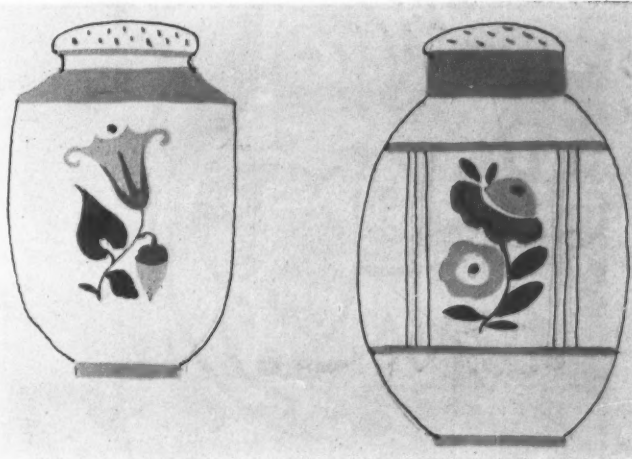
There are several different treatments which can be used in working out the designs given. First and most simple is to use gold, but as that does not offer much in the way of adventure I am giving you other suggestions. Green and blue is an ever pleasing combination and any one of the patterns would work up well done in that coloring. For the upper part of the flower shape use a mixture of Russian Green, two parts, to Baby Blue, one part, in a light wash. For the wavy line above it, the stamen, and the base of the flower use Royal Blue. For the leaves and stem a clear green, Royal Green, two parts, and one part Deep Blue Green. The bands and handles may be of Royal Blue and where a line is added, as in cups Nos. 3 and 4, the line may be of the green. In No. 3 the dots should be Royal Blue.

A color scheme of pink and green would also be attractive. Carnation used delicately gives a lovely coral pink, and may be used a bit stronger for the darker parts. With this use Grey Green, which will also be very fine for the bands and handles. In any one of the arrangements shown a simple band of color down the back of the handles would be very pleasing instead of the solid color, and easier to do beside. If still another color scheme is desired quite a pretty one would be to use a light wash of Lemon Yellow in the upper part of the flower and Violet for the rest. With this the green mixture first mentioned would be the best. Green will be fine for the bands, but gold could be used if preferred. There is a feeling that the entire treatment in color is somewhat smarter looking than to introduce gold. Violet and Rose and Green is still another suggestion. For this use Rose for the upper section, with Violet for the rest, and with this the Grey Green.

For the benefit of any readers who are truly beginners we will briefly go over the directions of just how to go at

the problem. Having chosen which arrangement you care to do (and if you have never worked before it had better be cup No. 1) make a very careful tracing of the motif. Place this in position on the china, and fasten it into place with a small strip of adhesive plaster at each upper corner. Next slip under this a small piece of graphite impression paper, and then go over the drawing with a tracing point of some sort. Having mislaid my agate point one day I found in an emergency that a blunt pointed wool needle turned the trick successfully. Should the impression paper be very fresh it is sometimes too oily. If this is the case lay it face up on the table and rub over it with a piece of soft muslin or tuft of cotton. If the graphite coating is heavy the tracing is sometimes so oily or greasy that it is difficult to make an outline take over it. When your tracing is completed go over the line with India ink, using a fine pen. When this is finished go over it with a piece of fine sandpaper until the inked line is a light grey. This will give a perfect base on which to work, the ink line of course disappearing in the firing. Use rather small brushes for this work, a No. 4 square shader for the larger spaces, and a No. 4 pointed brush for the lines and dots. Keep the edges clean and clear cut, cleaning up any ragged and uneven places with toothpick and cotton. The colors will need a second painting and firing, though if the work is very carefully done it is possible to do the work in one firing. No outlining is used on this problem, but it could be, using the same color with which each section of the design is painted.

To sum up our main points: Choose cups of simple good shape. Keep ever in mind "fitness to purpose." *Do not* have handle over-elaborate or difficult to hold. *Do not* choose the top-heavy type easy to upset nor the footed kind, equally impractical. *Do not* be afraid to experiment in the application of this or some other motif in other and original ways. Keep the colors clear and crisp and edges clean cut. *Do not* attempt to work over a thick heavy line of India ink. Rub it down to a light grey before you proceed to lay in the color or do any outlining.



Salts—Jetta Ehlers

## LITTLE THINGS

Do the bell-shaped flower on small salt in Violet with markings of Royal Blue. The leaves are Royal Green. Bud is treated same as flower. A tinted band of Violet at the top may be used. The larger one, use Rose on small flower, with the same on upper part of top flower. Use Royal Purple on the scalloped lower part. Royal Green for the leaves and stems. Make all bands and lines of Gold.



Designs for Plates—May Warner

#### SOME INTERESTING THINGS SEEN IN THE STUDIOS

A bowl done in black, white gold, and touches of vivid green. Bowl was rather high and straight and very stunning. Pewter candlesticks were used with it, with green candles.

A salad set done on the grey wedgewood ware with a light red violet, touches of scarlet and dark red violet and a soft old blue. Black was used also. The whole effect was very beautiful and unusual. This was in enamel.

Some little dishes for almonds which were a lovely red on the outside and lined with gold. Nice for special occasions such as the holiday season or St. Valentine's Day table decoration.

A very stunning set of plates were done on the deep yellow Wedgewood, the leaves being of turquoise blue, the flowers scarlet, with veinings of dark blue, as were the stems. Very rich in color and shown on deep ivory linen.



## A YEAR OF CREATIVE DESIGN

*(Continued from page 95)*

colored it would not be very real. ("Who ever heard of a black and gray rug?") That led to the discussion of colors one chooses for rugs. The class was quite surprised when told they would be held to a definite scheme in color. "I thought this was to be an original design," remarked one student. So we brought out the wheel and proved to him that he could not be original in a simple scheme of color, and that it would be easier for him to select his hues by one of the ordinary plans than to try for something new, only to find that he had fallen into an established scheme after all. We dabbled about on our practice papers a little while for this was the first time we had used paint and we had to get familiar with the feel of the brush, and by the end of that process there were few in the room who could not describe clearly approximately the appearance of the final plate. We found that we had to arrange for an enlarged corner in some cases, because our rug design would be too small to be clear as a whole. That corner was a great trial. In time we made it go around the corner of the rug instead of out of it, but every step in the process was the result of the discovery of difficulties. There was no dictation of method and no similarity of result.

Finally, armed with our new knowledge of color, and scraps on which we had worked out the parts of the design, we tried to think how our whole plate would look. The gentlest and most reserved girl in the room announced that it would not look right without the name of the student, and that stamped the last arrangements. On black card, since this was their first attempt in color, they balanced the rug, the corner, and the printing. Then we put up the results. The pupils themselves rated the designs. Only two received a perfect mark. Many stoutly defended their work from scathing criticism but inwardly marked the wisdom of it. The teacher made no comment. The only requisites for passing were: Did you ever see just that design before? Would you care to buy it and use it?

For the teacher the results accomplished were a kind of vaccination in design, it had "taken," a battle and a victory in visualizing, instruction in the principles of balance and rhythm, and in simple analogous color, and—what outweighed all else—a taste for independence with a scorn for copying.

The succeeding lessons were conducted on the same lines but proved to be much more expeditious. In fact the trouble was to keep ahead of the pupils and lead them. The next problem was a surface design, though we did not trouble to carry out definite drop and match repeats. We were after the main group of a good surface pattern, not its technical construction. We decided that there were not so many flower forms after all. The rosette, bell, bud, pistillate, Persian pink, pomegranate forms were all contributed. Many practice papers in charcoal, with no design to look at, marked the beginning of the second lesson on this subject. We had had talks on Persian prints and colonial quilts, on grandmother's sprig muslin and grandfather's flowered vest, on ancient wall papers and modern peasant embroidery. The biology students told us about the parts of a real flower, and we decided that those would not do. So we made our own. That made it necessary to take up the question of what makes flowers lovely and we discovered variety of form, size and edge,

unity of construction, and emphasis and subordination. We put those principles away with our previous discoveries concerning balance and rhythm. We went to work. There were no stunning creations, but you could feel the honest power in that room. And this was the second lesson in the course.

For criticism, one student suggested that if we had studied a few designs of flowers we might have done better. The answer was immediate and unstudied. "Who wants to do designs you can find in the stores? Of course we don't know as much as regular paid designers, but we want to do our own just the same."

There followed a third and fourth problem of the same nature. We were not trying to be wall paper designers, nor rug makers. We were discovering things in design for ourselves. After each result we examined the same thing done by a professional, and many a clear judgment on the part of the pupils assured the teacher that the way to learn is to do. We soon left the narrow field of one subject. A space design was adapted simultaneously to a hat, a pocket-book, a scarf, a painted tray, a school banner. The principle struggled for and achieved in most cases was harmony of form. Color developed later. Notebooks grew fat. The last problem found the class intact in number, in spite of Spring illness, with an interest that had never flagged. The last problem was applied work. In a mixed class of boys and girls this is always difficult. We carried out a block print for a lamp shade, pleated and strung it into shape. It wasn't easy. Examinations hit us amidsthips. Blocks were lost. Tools disappeared miraculously. Paint gave out. The ribs of old umbrellas which we filed into gouges had a certain habit of slipping. Still, we struggled on. In the end, a small girl announced, "This problem is no good. You spend your time making a pattern on the whole paper, and then you fold it into creases and your pattern goes blewey." I do not know what "blewey" may be in the bright lexicon of youth, but I know that pupil had learned something more than I had planned to teach her, and that she would go on teaching herself after her school days were over. That is the real end of creative work.

*(To be continued)*

Tile—Ernest Blauvelt



Hugo B. Froelich Memorial Window

A stained glass window in memory of Hugo B. Froelich, director of manual arts in the city schools and principal of Fawcett School of Industrial Arts at the time of his death in June, 1925, has been placed in the Newark Museum. The window is the gift of public school teachers of the city. The window has been set in place on the north staircase of the museum.



#### NEAR EAST BOY POTTERS

(Continued from page 85)

next process is the drawing and the painting of the pieces. The colors used in this are made from secret formulas which are handed down from father to son. They are then dipped in a thick mixture of water and fine ground flint which, when they have been for a second baking, becomes the white transparent glaze.

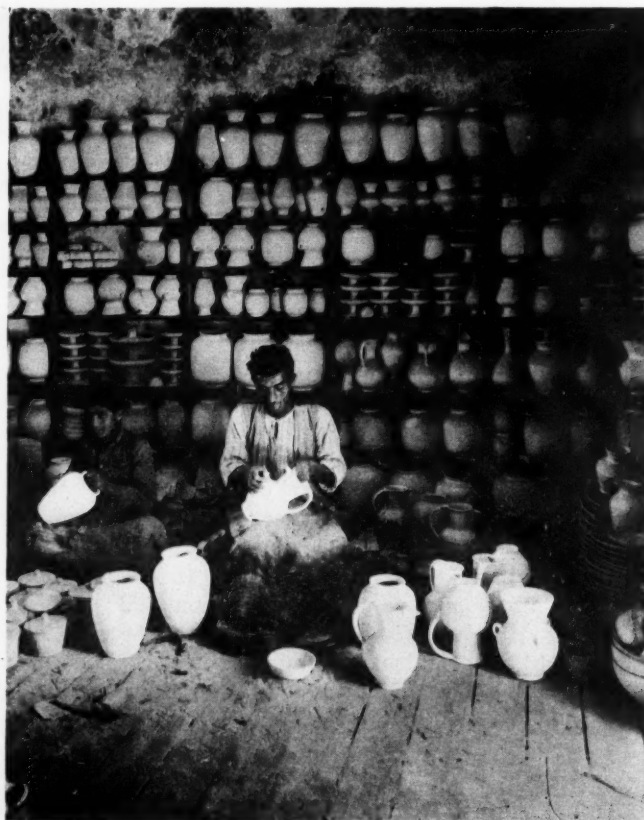
*Temperature*—Unlike the Western pottery, they have no absolute measure of temperature in the oven, but there is a small peek-hole through which the experienced potter can see and determine the proper temperature as well as the progress of the glazing.



A Class of Near East Relief Orphan Girls in the Decorating Room of the "Kutahia" Pottery



Near East Relief Ex-Orphan Boys Apprentices in the Pottery at Jerusalem, arranging the "Kutahia" Pottery in the Show-room



Near East Relief Ex-Orphan Helping an Older Man at the Pottery at Jerusalem